

what Section 16 said was that if a man who alleges he is a biological father appears at the adoption hearing to finalize...when the adoption is being finalized which would be at least six months after the placement of the child, if he appears at the hearing and wishes to assert his paternity and seek custody, that the court would set a hearing on the issue of paternity and determine his status and whether he is fit and suitable to obtain custody and that if all parties agree the court could immediately commence the hearing or if they didn't all agree, the court would set a later hearing I assume and the court shall inform the man claiming to be the father of any right to council. In my view this section simply raised the question as to whether or not even after you've given the notice provided in the prior sections to the father and he's had an opportunity perhaps to come in and claim his rights earlier, this gives in essence another opportunity for there to be a disruption in the life of the child that is being adopted and the adoptive parents for another possible traumatic situation where the stability of the child and where the child eventually is going to be raised could come into question. So rather than, and this has not been in the law before. This is new language entirely and we have the, in my view, ample protections for notice to the father to be given during that six-month period and prior to the adoption hearing for them to assert their rights as well as the registry for them an opportunity for them to come in and sign the registry that they are the father and wish to be acknowledged as such, so I don't think we need another opportunity for someone to appear out of the blue, so to speak, at the adoption hearing and say I am the father and even though I might have been given notice earlier, even though I might have known about it, I've decided now that I want to stop the adoption. I don't want to have this law provide for that, what I think would be a very unfortunate situation. Now the court might eventually decide one way or the other but I don't think we need this additional section to provide this opportunity at this point of the proceedings. And I started off wanting to just change a little bit of the section, but I decided that I'd just rather have that section out. The other part of the amendment simply makes a minor change in Section 17 because Section 17 referred to the hearing after this biological father appears in Section 16, so Section 17 now would deal with any hearing to determine the biological father's parental rights rather than just referring to the hearing that would have been held pursuant to Section 16. So primarily the crux of this amendment is simply to strike Section 16. We had quite a bit of